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ABSTRACT

Reviews major events leading to the publication of the Anglo American Cataloging Rules, 2nd edition (AACR2) and discusses information sources which played a part in the AACR2 decision making process including: (1) the AACR2 volume itself; (2) the Library of Congress; (3) networks and consortia; (4) conferences, institutes, and workshops; (5) publications; (6) library study committees; and (7) college/university administrators. The paper concludes with an examination of two decision making models--Mason and Bookstein/Kocher--to determine whether academic libraries have applied them. Twenty-seven references are provided. (RBF)

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A VIEW OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES RELATING TO AACR2

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Introduction

The business of library and information science obviously is information -- identifying it, managing it, retrieving it, and making it available to the user. Historically, our responsibility in part has been to assist that user in locating information which presents various viewpoints and biases and allow the user to make the decisions regarding the relevancy, accuracy, and appropriateness of the information.

We always discuss this process with other users in mind, but it is interesting to look at the activity when we are the recipients, the consumers of the information. There probably isn't a more relevant or opportune example of this situation than the introduction over two years ago of the second edition of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (commonly referred to as AACR2). This issue certainly has given us a multitude of opinions of the merits and demerits of this new cataloging code. How are academic libraries using this variety of information to make the necessary decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of AACR2? Because of time limitations today, the general theory of decision making in libraries or in higher education will not be treated in great detail. Rather, I will limit my comments to applying different decision making models to academic libraries and specifically to the decision making process and the flow of information relative to AACR2.

Review of Events Leading to the Publication of AACR2

In order to appreciate the circumstances surrounding this important decision, let us review some of the major events leading to the publication of AACR2 in 1978.

The first edition of the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR1) was published in 1967, but developments occurred on several fronts to cause some librarians to feel change was needed. Let me list five of these developments: (1) notable progress toward international cataloging standards; (2) proliferation of cataloging rules for nonbook materials not adequately covered in AACR1; (3) numerous amendments and clarifications to the AACR1 rules; (4) progress toward reconciling some of the differences in the two versions of AACR1; and (5) far-reaching policy changes announced by the Library of Congress.[1]

As early as 1973, the RTSD Cataloging and Classification Section's Descriptive Cataloging Committee within the American Library Association issued a recommendation for a new edition of AACR.[2] The following year (1974) representatives of the national library associations and national libraries of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States met to define objectives and develop procedures for achieving such a revision. A Joint Steering Committee was named and given the ultimate authority for the content and production of a second edition.[3]

In 1975 the revision process continued and some problem areas were identified, namely fullness of the entry of personal names, corporate entry, and entry for serials.[4] The next year (1976) an advanced draft of the new rules was reviewed by a number of groups. If quantity is a measure of success, this Draft Review Program was certainly successful, eventually compiling some 1,000 pages of comments from many circles.[5] However, differences of opinion were beginning to surface regarding the philosophical approach of the revisions, the timing of their adoption, and even their necessity altogether. One of the first such dissensions, which received national library attention, was the resignation in 1976 of a respected member of the AACR2 Revision Committee within ALA, indicating the proposed change was too much, too fast.[6] As I recall, it was reading of this development that first brought the whole AACR2 matter to my attention. This resignation would symbolically serve as a sign of things to come.

1977 saw the AACR2 revision issue discussed at the ALA Annual Conference. "Controversy erupted over a possible delay in publication to permit more time for evaluating the possible impacts on local cataloging systems."[7] This controversy heightened in 1978 and is described in The ALA Yearbook for that year thusly:

> The publication of AACR2 (December 1978) occasioned an advance wave of apprehension. Representatives, particularly from American research libraries, met in small and large groups to try to assess the effect of the new cataloging code on existing systems and records. The Library of Congress announcement concerning the freezing of its card files stimulated the anxiety to the point of crisis.[8]

A call for a study of the benefits and costs of AACR2 was made by the Canadian Association of Research Libraries.[9] The Library and Information Technology Association (LITA), which concerns itself with the development and application of automated systems and related issues, passed a resolution calling for a delay in the adoption and implementation of AACR2. Also, over half of the responding members of the Association of Research Libraries -- an organization representing over 100 of the largest academic and research libraries in North America -- favored this same delay. Later that same "eventful" summer, representatives from fifteen library organizations unanimously passed a resolution that the Library of Congress adopt AACR2 in 1981 (not 1980), which was accepted by LC.[10]

A myriad of articles, letters to editors and rebuttals were appearing in the library literature by this time and some offered advice as to how to use the extra year for planning and preparation. While most articles were serious in their tone, others allowed lighter moments, such as John Likins' remarks:

> Administrators often complain that catalogers do everything possible to make the library catalog hard for patrons and staff to use. It crossed my mind while listening to Michael Gorman at NELA Sept. 25 that writers of cataloging codes take the process to a higher plane, making catalogs hard for even catalogers to use. The next logical step from Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition might be the Intergalactic Cataloging Rules, perfectly uniform throughout the galaxy, and totally incomprehensible to all -- human beings, catalogers, wookies. . .[11]

The Alternative Catalog Newsletter began in 1978 "to provide an informal medium for communication among libraries involved in the development of automated catalogs, and others interested in following these events. Timely sharing of information is essential during a period of rapid innovation."[12]

In yet another effort to provide as much information as possible regarding AACR2, the Library Information and Technology Association sponsored a Closing the Catalog Institute late in 1978. While much discussion ensued, few definite answers were forthcoming. How symbolic it was that copies of the new code, would at last be distributed at that conference. The code -- which had had many a phrase written about it, many a vote taken on it, and many an intellectual discussion regarding it -- was real. One Institute attendee, Elizabeth Matthews, captured the moment perfectly when she wrote

> The announcement came from the speaker's platform that the volumes were available in an adjacent area. When he announced at the same time that there might not be enough copies for each participant to have one, [Lucia Rather's] words, "don't panic" suddenly lost their meaning.
>
> Footsteps could be heard in the aisle as the announcer continued. First, only a few people crept out slowly, almost unnoticed; others followed, not so slowly...I was sitting next to the aisle, and felt that I had better not let this opportunity slip by...So I, too, joined this group of grim, determined librarians...Silently, one by one we turned to walk away from the Box, each clutching the volume. No one smiled, no one said a word. It resembled a sacred ritual. I saw that a few were obtaining Michael Gorman's signature. I did not get in that line--not that I had anything against the editor...With such an autographed copy, I was not at all sure that I knew how to handle that kind of note on a catalog card. It used to be "Author's autograph presentation copy," or perhaps could be adjusted to "Editor's autograph presentation copy." What would such a note require in the new rules? I turned away with the unautographed copy, satisfied that already I had avoided the first "problem" with the new rules.[13]

The raucous year of 1978 moved into a more mellow 1979 and some people felt that the AACR2 panic had turned to preparation.[14] Topics such as staff training and implementation were prevalent.

1980 can be characterized as another "surprise" year, in that controversy erupted once again. In a discussion of this issue at an ARL meeting, Susan Martin stated:

> We have moved, over the past couple of years, from the kind of of "motherhood and apple pie" generalizations about AACR2 and the intent of the cataloging code, to the specifics of code implementation. It is an extremely complex subject, and for this reason I have found that, in talking to people, it is difficult to come to grips with what exactly the problems are.[15]

As the rules continued to be studied in many libraries and the Library of Congress continued to announce its interpretations of them, the question of benefit versus cost was again being asked. This turn of events prompted the editor of the Alternative Catalog Newsletter to invite statements and opinions regarding the net effect of AACR2 on libraries.[16]

Controversy arose concerning this request for some objected to such a discussion of AACR2 "outside officially sanctioned channels." Differences of opinion also seemed to exist regarding the level of acceptance of the new rules on both sides of the Atlantic.[17] One estimate indicated 75% of the responses to this call were against the implementation of AACR2.

So, that brings us to the end of 1980 and the fateful "Day One" -- January 2, 1981 -- the date the Library of Congress and many other libraries were beginning to implement AACR2.

Information: A Requirement for Effective Decision Making

Most writers and researchers agree that effective information processing, flow, and use are vital for any organization. Charles McClure indicates effective decision making requires sufficient contact with information, plus selection of information, plus an ability to handle the information.[19] McClure also addresses the matter of persons who are "information rich" or "information poor." He studied the contact with specific information sources made by a sample of academic library administrators compared with other librarians. McClure found that administrators had a far greater average number of overall contacts during a given time period (90), as compared to 54 contacts by public services librarians.[20] These differences also exist with the average number of contacts with external information sources; 42 contacts for administrators,

22 contacts for public services librarians, but only 13 contacts for technical services librarians.[21] If one assumes this sample is representative of academic librarianship in general, the administrator was at an advantage in number of contacts when questions regarding AACR2 began to surface in the mid-1970s. However, with the introduction of the AACR2 issue and its direct impact on technical services operations in academic libraries, I suspect the number of external contacts for technical services librarians have increased from McClure's findings. How do libraries use information sources? I don't mean to be evasive, but different libraries use them differently. The following eleven information sources illustrate the diversity of influences which played a part in the AACR2 decision making process:

(1) The AACR2 volume itself would obviously be a central information source. Time and effort on the part of technical services librarians and others were required before recommendations to the library administration could be made. It should be noted, the review process had been in effect for several years before the final official copy of the rules was available.

(2) The Library of Congress played a very important, perhaps the central role, in the decision making process. Most academic libraries are dependent upon LC's cataloging information, via MARC tapes, and its interpretation of the rules themselves. These interpretations, announced in LC Catalog Service Bulletins and its AACR2 Institute Handbook[22] (for regional institutes) gave the library community much needed information.

(3) Networks and consortia often were dependent upon LC practice, but issued standards and guidelines which influenced academic libraries.

(4) Conferences, institutes, workshops served as a vehicle for sharing information.

(5) Publications (journals, newsletters and monographs) contained a myriad of technical and general statements on the AACR2 issue. A library catalog cost model project, prepared for the ARL and representing seventy-two libraries,

was published in June 1980, with results of computer runs available prior to that time.[23] This effort furnished more information to libraries. Decisions at various libraries often were announced in publications such as LJ/SLJ Hotline, C&RL News, and Alternative Catalog Newsletter.

(6) The library's internal AACR2/Future of the card catalog study committee often provided extremely detailed analyses of AACR2 issues as they affect that library. These findings provided needed documentation for the college/university administration.

(7) Other libraries' study committee findings were helpful in gaining new perspectives. Many of these reports appeared in Alternative Catalog Newsletter. An early account of the organization of such a committee from a managerial perspective appeared in the September 1978 issue of Journal of Library Automation[24].

(8) Library staff opinions were often solicited during in-house workshops.

(9) The opinions of the higher level college/university administrators were obtained, not only to appraise them of possible changes to the library's catalogs, and impact on library users, but also the financial implications.

(10) The opinions of colleagues from other libraries served as an informal information source. While circumstances at libraries would differ in many respects, knowledge of the decisions and accompanying rational were useful to some decision makers.

(11) And lastly, the suspicion that the decision maker's own opinion had a very strong influence. Robert Kemper, in his chapter on library planning in volume one of Advances in Librarianship, states this fact quite well.

> Assumptions about people and things control what the library administrator plans to do. The things the library administrator takes for granted, the assumptions he makes about himself, about those with whom he works, about his government, about his institutional environment, about other libraries, about library patrons, and the assumptions he makes about society -- all these assumptions control the behavior of the library administrator. They determine what he does and why he does it.[25]

Decision Making Models

With a review of the events leading to AACR2 and a discussion of various information sources, let us now look at two decision making models and see whether academic libraries may have applied them.

Ellsworth Mason described the making of a complex choice as having seven steps, namely: (1) the gathering of information, (2) a total view of all the library's aims, (3) a broad view of everything that will be affected by the decision, (4) the anticipation of any collateral problems that may result, (5) an adjustment to the potentials of the people who will put it into action, (6) a judgment of whether the end result will approximate the anticipation, and (7) a clear view of ways of following up to see whether in fact the end has resulted.[26]

Did academic libraries generally follow these steps? (1) There certainly was a tremendous amount of gathering of information and (2) most internal AACR2/ Future of the card catalog study committees had representation from public and technical services, therefore, a total view of all the library's aims existed. (3) A close analysis of issues that would be affected was performed and (4) efforts were made to anticipate collateral problems. (5) Many libraries conducted (and are conducting) in-house training sessions for both public and technical services staff to better equip those who would be responsible for implementing AACR2. It is too early to tell whether libraries are successful with the final two steps, i.e., (6) judging whether end results match anticipated results and (7) overall evaluation. Time will tell. Generally speaking in my opinion libraries followed the Mason model.

A second decision making model is put forth by Abraham Bookstein and Karl Kocher of the University of Chicago and described in volume nine of Advances in Librarianship.[27] Five components are given in this operations research context, namely: (1) the presence of measurable objectives, (2) distinct

alternatives, (3) a knowledge of the "state of the world" regarding the issue, (4) a development of a model, (5) testing the model to identify the most feasible alternative.

Was this method for decision making followed? (1) Objectives were given in most reports of study committees, some of which were mathematically measurable, others were not. (2) Distinct alternatives were present -- i.e., adopt AACR2 totally; adopt AACR2, but comply with Library of Congress options; adopt AACR2 only with new cataloging and make no effort to reconcile variations with existing headings -- but for many libraries the issue was a fait accompli, they had to comply with the Library of Congress. (3) A continual effort was made to become and stay informed with other libraries' decisions and developments. (4) Some studies created models to anticipate the costs and other impacts on the catalogs and the users for each alternative, and lastly, (5) testing of alternatives was done to varying degrees of detail. I feel libraries complied in a general way with the Bookstein-Kocher Model.

Conclusion

To summarize, I have attempted to put the decision making process in academic libraries relating to AACR2 in its historical perspective by reviewing a number of events leading to the publication of this revised catalog code, I have discussed a number of information sources available to many academic libraries, and have looked at two decision making models to see if libraries followed them. My assessment would be "yes." Realistically speaking, not too many alternatives existed because of the dependence on the Library of Congress, but many libraries devoted a great deal of time to this entire project. I believe these libraries will benefit from their efforts with the result being improved planning and decision making for the future.

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